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ABSTRACT

A unit has been developed that educators can use to promote teachers' and librarians' understanding of the literature written for children in China. The purpose of the unit is to help teachers and librarians develop some fundamental ideas about China as a background for understanding the English translated versions of Chinese children's literature. The program is divided into three parts: (1) understanding China, (2) appreciating its literature, and (3) a brief summary of China's history in chronological outline. The program also provides learning activities that are the outgrowth of four specific objectives: to determine how the literature reflects the social, political, and educational aims of China; to examine and assess the literature in light of certain literary elements; to compare the translated stories of Chinese authors with similar stories written by non-Chinese authors; and to develop methods for sharing these books with children. (A bibliography on understanding China and booklists of Chinese children's literature published in China and in the United States are attached.) (Author/RL)

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INTERNATIONALISM IN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

UNDERSTANDING CHINA: APPRECIATING ITS LITERATURE

- A Unit -

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INTERNATIONALISM IN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

- A Unit -

Part One: Understanding China

Part Two: Appreciating Literature

Rationale

To have its citizens prepared to participate in a global community is an impending need in America. This is indicated by the resumption of relations between China and the United States. Responding to this need would be a strategic move for American education. One small but significant contribution is to prepare teachers and librarians to know something about China. Having studied its literature, they can then promote intercultural understandings as they work with children and laypersons.

Purposes

The major purpose of this unit is to develop understandings about the literature written for children in China. In order to understand and perhaps come to appreciate its literature, one must first know something about the country, its history, its people, customs, traditions and beliefs--all that makes up its culture. Therefore, the unit seeks to facilitate the development of this background in teachers and librarians.

A second major purpose is to provide opportunities for students to read, analyze, discuss and associate the literature with the ideological constructs of China.

Objectives

1. To determine how the literature reflects the social, political and educational aims of the country.
2. To examine and assess materials according to these literary elements: theme, values, setting, characterization, readability, roles, activities (ways of life), plot, authenticity, style, format.
3. To compare and contrast stories written by Chinese authors with similar stories written by non-Chinese authors. Look for: stereotypes, cultural misconceptions or distortions, and literary elements.
4. To provide the opportunity for students to develop strategies for sharing these books with children.

Concepts

--Revisionism

--Politics of communal living

--"Hundred Flowers"

--Great Leap Forward

--Five Great Loves

--Autumn Harvest Uprising

--Philosophical differences between Chinese Nationalism and Communism

--Differences between ideals of Chiang Kai-shek and Sun Yat-sen; Chiang and Chou En-lai; Chiang and Mao Tse-tung

--Yenan Forum on Literature and Art

--The Cultural Revolution

Changes that occurred: economic, sociological, ideological, political, literary and art, cultural

--Five Haos for workers

--Purposes of Literature and Art

--Problems of Literature and Art

--Politics of love and marriage

--Demons old and new

--Communism, socialism, nationalism, imperialism

Learning Activities: Part One

1. Research (Large Group):

   Divide into groups along the chronological outline for the purpose of gaining knowledge and understanding about the historical events listed in the outline. Share learnings:

   a) Present explanations in sequential order

   b) Present material in discussion format

2. Assign the following tasks: Reincarnation

   a) You are Mao Tse-tung at the Yenan Forum. Summarize your Thoughts on the purposes of literature and art. Tell why you feel as you do--why these media serve your aims.

b) You are a writer attending the Forum. You are troubled about how you will meet the needs espoused by Mao. Tell what you foresee as problems of literature and art. Then, explain how you would strive to handle the problems. Do you agree with Mao's point of view? Why or why not?

3. Problem:

The "Hundred Flowers" concept: "Let a hundred flowers bloom, a hundred voices contend," was introduced during 1956-57. The slogan heralded a move toward literary freedom. A recent issue of the Chronicle of Higher Education carried an article stating that the new Literacy Freedom displeases some Chinese officials.

Debate the issue

Proposition: Publications of 1980 still need strict controls because the people are not yet ready to read material presenting the negative side of socialist society.

4. More Tasks: Reincarnation

The spirits of Sun Yat-sen, Chiang Kai-shek, Chou En-lai and Mao Tse-tung meet at the Yangtze River Bridge in Nanking. They are each extolling the merits of his own policy of governance and defend it as right for China. Assume the posture of these men and present this scenario. Allow no more than 5-minutes for your individual contribution.

5. On Love and Politics: Argue both sides of the issue

You are one part of this couple. Both of you are 26 years of age and are very much in love and want to marry. You are both of the same opinion on most things. A basic difference, however is along party lines or ideals. She is a loyal, hard-working member and wants to devote her life to the commune and the people. He desires to become a cadre member and wants to live in the city.

<u>React to this situation</u>.

Considering the party's stand on love and politics, decide what you would do. Why?

6. Teaching Episode:

Plan a lesson for teaching a class of five and six year olds the 5-loves: Love of Chairman Mao, Communist party, Country, Collective life and Physical labor. Provide a means for testing the learners' mastery.

7. Written Response:

The Great Leap Forward was envisioned as a period for China to grow economically, militarily and scientifically. They hoped for greater productivity and prosperity through an expanded communal system, modern technology and industry. All did not go as well as was hoped but the people survived. Today, the people of China are fed, are working, are being educated, have health care and the country has repaid all debts to other countries. In addition, prices remain stable.

Write a letter to a classmate[to be exchanged and read in class] expressing how and in what ways you think the literature will be influenced by this bootstrap approach to self determination. Keep in mind the purposes for literature and art as decreed by Mao Tse-tung. Be specific--use concrete examples.

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Nee, The Cultural Revolution

Revolution described, 1-74; Appendix, 75-91

MacFarquhar, The Forbidden City

Chapter VII, 124-35: Hundred Flowers; Great Leap Forward; May Fourth Movement; Red Guards; Boxers; Communism

Chapter VI, 118-22: Significant events in history; Political Change; Rebellion, Revolution; Emergence of Mao Tse-tung; Anti-imperialism; Marxism-Leninism; Nationalism; Chiang Kai-shek

Myrdal and Kessle, The Revolution Continued

The Revolution, 25-55; The New Intellectual, 115-19, 139; Criticism, 120-31; Women, 132-38

Mao Tse-tung, Yenan Forum on Literature and Art, 1-41

Snow, Red China Today

Why China Went Red, 96-106; Chou En-lai and America, 113-20; The Long March, 155-63; Differences between USSR and China, 317-43

Communes, 404-10, 419-24; Literature and Music, 534-42; Crime and Punishment, 543-45

Learning Activities: Part Two

Objective 1: To determine how the literature reflects the social, political and educational aims of the country

1. Analysis, Planning and Development Project:

Huang Cheng, Capture the Bald Eagle

Hsu Kuang-yao, Little Soldier Chang Ka-tse

Hao Yan, The Call of the Fledgling

Wang An-yu, et al., They Were Three

Using stories from the books listed, students will develop the following ideas

a) Analyze each story. Pull out as much information about the country as is provided.

b) Plan listening activities centered around this information.

c) Plan for reading some stories to children. Establish purposes for listening. Structure questions and plan discussions.

d) Be prepared to help children understand some of the actions and activities of the characters should they ask.

e) Develop research ideas for building or extending the information gained, i.e., Collect artifacts: maps, replicas, jewelry, pottery; Read about aspects of life: games, food, climate, beliefs, mores, folkways, language, geography,

2. Reading and Reaction:

Mao Tse-tung laid out the purposes of literature and art. From the bibliography, select 5 books. Analyze each separately in terms of the Four Purposes. React to the questions which follow. Support your position by citing specific instances.

a) In what ways and to what extent does the book fulfill these purposes?

b) Based on your perceptions prior to reading the books, were your predictions about the influences Mao's purposes had on literature accurate? What were the strengths of your predictions? the shortcomings?

c) Make a list of the characteristics typical of the characters. Put them in some classification scheme. What do these tell you about the literature and the ideals they serve?

d) In terms of idealism, what potential do you feel the material has so far as its effects on its audience?

e) Rewrite one short story in very simple language for the young child. Show how you would develop understandings about China from this material. Create charts, mobiles, picturamas, dioramas, puppetry and puppet shows to enhance the project.

3. Select 5 or 6 picture books. Demonstrate how and/or to what extent each of these books in its individual way reflects the 1) social, 2) political and 3) educational aims of China.

a) What technique(s) does the author use to get the message across

for each aspect?

b) What effects do you feel the stories in these books might have upon family life from a sociological, political and educational standpoint?

c) Upgrade the textual part of one of the books. That is, write a simple story appropriate for an older child or young adult. Use it for oral reading to children or for their silent reading.

d) Develop a project showing how you would help the young child learn about China as told through the picture books. Provide for listening, speaking, reading and writing.

Objective 2: To examine and assess materials according to these literary elements: theme, values, settings, characterization, readability, roles, activities, plot, authenticity, style, format.

4. Evaluating Literature:

Use your own or select items from an evaluative instrument. Assess the literary merits of several works. Criteria should be appropriate for the type of work being considered. Use a veriety of types: picture books, historical fiction, short story, illustrated and predominately textual. How do you rate the literary quality of the materials? What seems to be predominate concern, literary quality or literary purpose? How do you justify your position?

Objective 3: To compare and contrast stories written by Chinese authors with comparable stories written by non-Chinese authors. Look for stereotypes, cultural misconceptions or distortions.

5. Compare/Contrast

From the bibliography of works published in America About Chinese people, select several titles that are comparable with several published in China. Note the similarities and differences in how Chinese authors and non-Chinese authors, and where appropriate, illustrators treat various aspects of the literature: theme, characterization, plot, authenticity, home and family life, sex roles, art work, story content, work ethics, dialogue, viewpoint.

a) Using these aspects as criteria, make a list of similarities and a list of differences.

b) After compiling the list, attempt to answer the following questions and others you develop:

b1--How do the differences affect the literary quality of the works?

b2--So far as sex roles are concerned, what do Chinese authors show as the dominant role? Non-Chinese author? What other impressions do both authors make? What misconceptions does one work point up in the other? Stereotypes? distortions?

b3--As for illustrators and the art work, how are physical features and modes of dress affected by the Chinese and non-Chinese artist's interpretation?

b4--Do Chinese authors and illustrators tell different stories and paint different pictures of China? If yes, how and in what ways? If yes, how is the reader affected by it?

b5--Between the two groups of authors, do they present opposing views, conflict and controversy, or do they emphasize a single interpretation of events? Can you make a distinction between the two groups? If yes, in what way(s)?

b6--Does the reader learn anything new about a given topic from the Chinese works as opposed to the non-Chinese authors' works? Explain.

b7--Write a brief summary of your findings as aresult of this study. Make a list of your conclusions.

Objective 4: To provide the opportunity for students to develop strategies for sharing Chinese books with children.

Before deciding upon ways to present the literature to American children, teachers and librarians must consider some problems that may arise. Because of the political purposes the literature is designed to serve in China, American teachers and librarians must be prepared to deal with parents who may object or question, to deal with censorship should it arise, and to perhaps use restraint because of their own feelings. The learning activities for Objective 4, then, are designed to prepare teachers to cope with objections to books and to consider the merits of those objections. They must also be able and ready to defend the use of the materials with clarity and with enlightenment.

6. Developing a Position:

Establish a point of view about What and How to teach Chinese literature. Prepare to debate both sides of an issue.

Proposition: Chinese literature should be taught to American children and should be presented exactly as it is written.

7. Problem Solving:

You have been summoned to your principal's office only to find a small group of parents awaiting you. They are upset because their second graders have been play acting some fo the stories you have providing them. In so doing, they were chanting some of the slogans from the stories. Plan ways to handle this problem through the following activities:

a) Decide what you would say.

b) Decide what actions you would take--what you would promise or concessions you might make.

c) Determine what you might do to avoid such happenings in the future. Plan specific actions and activities for parental involvement.

8. Creative Involvement:

Decide on a collective theme that brings several titles of works together. Plan a learning center which would involve children in listening, speaking, reading and writing.

a) Include some ways to get children to contribute ideas of their own.

b) Devise ways to evaluate children's perceptions and understandings of the people they are reading about.

9. More Creativity:

Develop a tape of yourself reading a folktale. Provide a brief

introduction which establishes specific purposes for listening. Plan activities designed to elicit oral, written and manipulative responses from children.

10. Group Work:

Develop a mini-exhibit: bulletin boards, mobiles, collages and other art techniques for sparking childrens' interest in specific themes and other aspects of the literature.

11. More Group Work:

Plan ways to involve music and art in literature program.

a) Select a book and interpret its mood or theme through musical instruments.

b) Make a collection of Chinese art and music of interest to children for later use in storytelling, etc.

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Evaluation:

Evaluation of concept attainment will take several forms:

1) Written objective test
2) Quality of completed assignments
3) Peer evaluation for group projects

Time Frame:

Ample material has been provided to extend the unit into a full semester's course. This is really the ideal-- Since there is so much to be learned. A unit within a course would require that some material be omitted or thet the instructor lecture in order to save students research and reading time. For those reasons the time must be flexible:

1) 3-4 weeks = unit
2) 6-8 weeks = special seminar
3) 13-15 wks = full semester course

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SYNOPSIS: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

China's History in Chronological Outline

1911--Dr. Sun Yat-sen: Overthrew Manchu Dynasty; is declared President of provisional government, first China Republic, Peking is the Capital; Revolution breaks out

191?--Sun resigns in favor of Yaun Shih-k'ai, as president; Kuomintang (Nationalists) dominate first parliament

1919--Resistance Movement: May Fourth, led by students. This movement resisted and defeated Japan in its attempts to colonize China

1920--Communist Manifesto translated into China: Mao organizes Socialist Youth Corps

1921--Chinese Communist Party formed; Sun Yat-sen elected President of Southern Chinese Republic in Canton

1925--Chiang Kai-shek takes military command; Sun Yat-sen dies

1926--Chiang Kai-shek succeeds Sun and leads Northern Expedition, defeats warlords and nominally unites China; Mao's Essay:"Analysis of the Classes of Chinese Society"

1927--Chiang establishes Republic with Nanking as the Capital; massacre of Shanghai Communists; split between Nationalists and Communists; Insurrection by Shanghai workers and peasants in Hunan Province--Organized by Mao Tse-tung: "Autumn Harvest Uprising";

1928--Mao's essay: "Why Can China's Red Political Power Exist?"; Nationalist Government established [A Kuomintang, 1-party dictatorship];

--Nationalists expel warlords from Peking

1930--Nationalist army fails to defeat communism

1931--Mao establishes Communist government in Kiangsi; Japan occupies Manchuria

1934--Start of the Long March

1935--Mao elected Chairman of the Central Committee; Student mass demonstration against Japan in Peking

1936--Chiang Kai-shek arrested; He and Chou En-lai negotiate to end the Civil War and form a united front against the Japanese

1937--Japan invades N. China and seize Peking, Shanghai and Nanking

1937--Nationalists and Communists join forces to defeat Japan

1942--"Talks at the Yenan Forum on Art and Literature," by Mao Tse-tung

1945--Communists and Nationalists defeat Japan, they withdraw

1946--Communists and Nationalists resume Civil War

1949--Mao proclaims People's Republic of China in Peking; Nationalist held Peking is freed and the Nationalists withdraw to Taiwan

1956--Talks of "Hundred Flowers" at Central Committee Conference on Intellectuals

1957--Temporary liberalization during "Hundred Flowers" period; Mao defines limitations of criticism in relation to the party in " On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People; Invites a plan to work out constructive criticisms to help in building socialism; advances thesis of "unity-criticism-unity"

as dialectical process to isolate "enemies of socialism" and resolve conflicts between the state, the Party, and "the People"; Many intellectuals are severely censured and make their self criticism

1958--Mao resigns as Chairman of People's Republic; "Great Leap Forward" initiates intensive industrialization and communal system

1960--China split with U.S.S.R. who withdraws aid

1960-63--China slowly recovers from near famine conditions

1966--Start of Cultural Revolution to purge revisionism; wave of terror by youthful Red Guards; China begins her third Five-Year Plan

1971--China admitted to the United Nations

1972--Nixon visits China

- SUMMARY -

Following the demise of the Manchu dynasty China's traditional society underwent a continuous disintegration. Chiang Kai-shek attempted to replace it with a capitalistic state under a military dictatorship. He wrestled with the communists over control. Traditionalsociety had been shattered by the impact of foreign industry, science and capitalism. The struggle between the Reds and Chiang was over whether China's modernization was to be achieved by private enterprise or under dictatorship of a very weak bourgeoise or by a proletarian revolution, led by the Communist Party--to establish public ownership over the basic means of production and to mobilize the whole people and their immense labor power.

Chiang Kai-shek and his bureaucracy were not elected but seized power and formed a "National Government" at Nanking. They executed thousands. Yet, thousands more ran the risk of being communists and struggled against the regime. The regime that was capitalistic in orientation and elitist in ideology--a dictatorship. Chiang Kai-shek's powers came to an end in 1936 when he was arrested as he sought refuge in a fox's den one very cold night. He was not harmed--not purged. There was no bloodshed.

After an agreement with his former adversary, Chou En-lai, Chiang joined in a pact and headed up an anti-Japanese coalition and put an end to the civil war. In 1945, the Japanese withdrew from China in

defeat and in 1949 Chiang and his Nationalist government withdrew to Taiwan after being defeated by the Communists. During the same year Mao Tse-tung proclaimed the People's Republic of China in Peking.

The years between 1949 and 1963 were a period of struggle and progress. In 1953 the first Five Year Plan was put into affect. This plan raised the gross national product by 11 percent a year. Then in 1958 the second Five Year Plan was approved by the People's Congress in Peking. It proposed to put the "Great Leap Forward" into motion. [1] The success of the first plan was not true of the second. Efforts to industrialize did not materialize and in 1960 Russia withdrew her support. A near famine occurred but by 1963 China slowly recovered. The communal system was effective. This provided an economic base upon which China could subsist. By 1966 the Cultural Revolution began. Episodes from this great period must be dealt with in smaller but specific detail to realize the impact it had on the country and its people. It is important to note, however, that it was started by two groups, the literate and politically active youngsters who compared the words of Mao with what was really going on in the village, and the old poor peasants and early Communists. The vanguard was composed of organized Communists: veterans and youngsters (Myrdal, 1970).

[1] The Great Leap Forward followed the Hundred Flowers and the Educational Revolution. An integral part of the Leap was the Educational Revolution, whose purpose was to transform the school system

from a "bourgeoise haven" into a revolutionary environment. University admissions policies were changed to provide greater representation of secondary level students from the countryside and from working class families.

THEORETICAL CONSTRUCTS OF THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION

1. The Cultural Revolution is an essential act of Chinese self preservation.

   ---Mao Tse-tung

2. University students and teenage school children are the first generation to be born and educated in the new society. They are the generation on which its future depends.
3. A mass movement can only be managed by the people themselves. Otherwise, it is a dictatorship of them instead of by them.
4. The priviledged must be eliminated so that they cannot be allowed to become a threat to socialist society.
5. Factory and farm work for all, professionals, intellectuals and technical people is necessary to close the gap between mental and manual labor. It is a way of bringing town and country folk together so as to ensure the aristocracy does not become the governing bureaucracy.
6. Restrict growth of towns to prevent provincialism.

7. Social and economic democracy can flourish when gaps between classes of people are closed.
8. Every Chinese must be armed and capable of using weapons to protect China from ideological and imperialistic enemies.
9. Politics must come first in the organization of every department of society.
10. Self criticism is necessary to insure that the work of the collective remains in the forefront.
11. "Let a hundred flowers bloom, a hundred voices contend."--Concept of the "Hundred Flowers"
12. The Cultural Revolution is a political revolution. It has meant a deeper democracy. The poor and lower middle peasant excercises a broad democracy, where decisions are all made at public meetings and general discussions implement economic policy and those reforms of interest to the masses.

China's Politics

--Leninism, Marxism, Englsism, Mao Tse-tung Thought as basic structure

--Socialism and Communism as organizing body

--Literature and Art linked with class struggle

--The people must be armed--prepared against war, aggression--not offenders but defenders

--One must always work for the revolution, exist for the revolution

--Power to the people, the masses

China's Ideology

--Classless society

--Education for the masses

--Work as an ethic

--The five loves:

- Chairman Mao
- Communist Party
- China
- Collective life
- Physical labor

--The people united

--Mao Tse-tung's thought as guide in all endeavors

--Self criticism

- Structure of the Cultural Revolution -

Economic Changes:

Four Modernizations:

1) Agriculture
2) Science and Technology
3) Industry
4) National Defense

Political Changes:

Power to the people:

1) Classlessness
2) Collective investment = higher yield/higher standard

of living

3) Decisions affecting all made at public meetings

4) General discussions implement economic policy and reforms affecting the masses

5) Collective investment in work = equitable distribution = basic security for all

Ideological Changes:

1) Basic security the right of all people

2) Self criticism/willing acceptance of public criticism

3) Fear neither difficulties or death

4) Be resolute/ fear no sacrifice/each a servant of the people

5) Mao's thought guide for all behavior

6) Be governed by decisions of the masses

7) Education not for self advancement but the collective

8) Start early to harvest, start young to groom

Cultural Changes:

1) Five guarantees:

- enough food
- enough clothes
- enough fuel
- an honorable funeral
- education for one's children

2) Women have same rights as men/daughters same rights as sons

3) Family unity and cooperation--father/husband share in work of the home

4) Criticize bourgeoise ideas

Sociological Changes:

1) Abolition of private ownership of the means of production

2) Health insurance fund (cooperative medicine)

3) Late marriage stabilizes family/limits births

4) Birth control: 2 children "O.K."/ 1 child ideal

5) Communal living

- Purposes of Literature and Art -

1. To help in the revolutionary work in facilitating the overthrow of the national enemy and the accomplishment of the task of national liberation
2. To serve as weapons to unite and educate the people to fight the enemy with one heart and one mind
3. To depict the people in the process of struggle and to help them combat their own shortcomings and errors so that they can advance.
4. To show artists and writers their primary task--to understand people and know them well

<u>Problems of Literature and Art</u>

1. Whom to serve?

   According to Lenin doctrine, the working people "the flowers of the country, its strength and its future"

   Who, then, are the masses?

   a) the workers, the class that leads the revolution

   b) the peasants, the most numerous and most steadfast allies in the revolution

c) Armed workers and peasants, main forces in the revolutionary war

d) the laboring masses of urban petty bourgeoise intellectuals

These four kinds of people form the overwhelming majority of the people.

2) How to serve?

a) By learning from the people, the workers, peasants and soldiers

b) By raising standards advance from the present level, then raise the level of literature and art in the direction in which the workers, peasants and soldiers are themselves advancing, in the direction in which the proletariat is advancing. Only by starting from the people can we have a correct understanding of popularization and of raising standards to find the proper relationship between the two.

"To understand Chinese Communism you must understand the peasant problem and study the people's communes. In China, the real country is the peasantry--Today one must begin with the land if one wishes to understand Chinese socialism." (Karol, 1967) Agriculture is the basic element of the Chinese economy.

The communes are a miniature state. They have a central government which supervises the whole enterprise, manages its finances, decides its investments, controls its relations with the outside world, and administers the nationalized sectors--farm machinery centers, repair shops, minor ancillary industries, etc. The central government

delegates powers to subdivisions, or brigades, which form a kind of "county" that in turn supervises the "municipalities" which are the basic units or teams. These teams have about 100 members living in the same village. Each team sends delegates to the commune general assembly (a sort of parliament) which meets about twice each year to discuss production and investment.

[Brigade= about a dozen teams. It coordinates major tasks so that advanced teams help the backward ones.]

Five Haos For Workers : Correct Political Thought

1. Be politically correct in one's thinking
2. Practice mutual help among one's comrades to reinforce the collective unity
3. Learn from the most advanced and teach the most backward
4. Learn how to innovate and economize at work
5. Fulfill production norms

On Love and Marriage

1. One must not marry lightly--both parties should know each other well before making a lifetime commitment--A young Chinese ought not accept the choice of parents for a marriage partner unless they desire to nad know each other well.
2. Marry for love not money, comfort--Break free of bourgeoise prejudices.

3. The best bond between a couple is the interest they have in the common task and their full agreement on political matters. They should know that communism is the best guarantee of their happiness. Love should help couples become revolutionary peasants who contribute to the building of socialism.
4. For birth control, sterilization is preferred--abortions are bad for the health.

This packet pulls together basic ideas about Chinese Socialism. It condenses a massive and complex concept into a few pages. For those interested in really knowing about China, this is merely a beginning. Much research, study, contemplation and observation is required.

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